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Abstract: Statistics are presented regarding the generation of young Americans under age 35 as of 2012 on topics including student debt, unemployment, and early retirement.
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The Beaten Generation

FIRST

DATA DIG

The economy has made life harder for most Americans in recent years, but young adults are facing an especially rough road. Their earnings, net worth, and optimism have all declined, in some cases sharply. Here's a map showing pitfalls and stumbling blocks in the path of adults under 35--and how conditions have worsened since 2005.

LONG, WINDING, AND DEPRESSING

The road young people are on is difficult indeed. Here's why:

THEIR HOME EQUITY HAS COLLAPSED ... -51%

VS. -21% FOR PEOPLE 35 AND OLDER

... DRAGGING DOWN THEIR NET WORTH -55%

VS. -20% FOR PEOPLE 35 AND OLDER

Fewer young adults think that early retirement is realistic.

WORKERS HOPING TO RETIRE AT AGE 65 OR YOUNGER -22%

66 AT THE EARLIEST +58%

STUDENT DEBT AT GRADUATION IS UP ... +19%

... SO IS UNEMPLOYMENT FOR COLLEGE GRADS ... +64%

... WHILE THEIR INCOME IS DOWN -4.5%

MORE ARE LIVING WITH THEIR PARENTS ... +31%

... AND THE BIRTH RATE IS DOWN -7.1%

NOTES: Changes are from 2005 (2004 for college debt) to latest numbers; dollars are inflation-adjusted. Income figure is for household. Unemployment, living with parents, and retirement expectations are for ages 25-34. Home equity, net worth, and income are median figures; student debt is an average.

SOURCES: Pew Research Center, Institute for College Access and Success, BLS, U.S. Census, NCHS, EBRI

PHOTO (COLOR)

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By BETH BRAVERMAN

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